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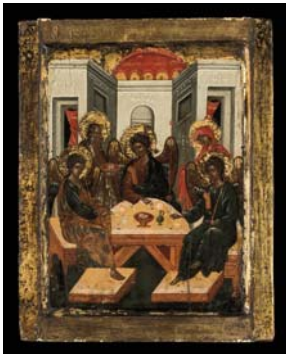
**AN ICON BELONGING TO THE LAST RUSSIAN TSAR, NICHOLAS II,
AND A RARE BYZANTINE PANEL LEAD THE ICON SALE THIS
SUMMER AT CHRISTIE'S**

Icons and Artefacts from the Orthodox World

Christies King Street

11 June 2007

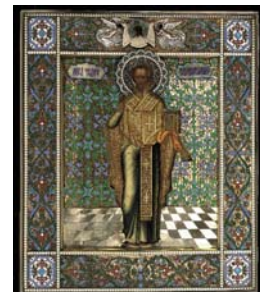
London – Christie's announce the auction of *Icons and Artefacts from the Orthodox World* which will take place in London on 11 June 2007 and will include 230 lots from various Orthodox Christian countries, predominantly Russia and Greece, as well as objects and icons from Crete, Bulgaria, Asia Minor and the Orthodox Levant, from the 14th to 20th centuries. Highlighting the sale is an outstanding 14th century Byzantine icon from Constantinople and a Russian icon of St. Nicholas that was originally owned by the last Russian Tsar, Nicholas II, complete with a dedication on the reverse of the panel testifying to the circumstances of the presentation of this piece. The sale is expected to realize in the region of £1 million.



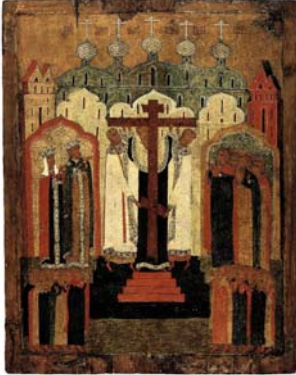
A rare 14th century Byzantine icon of the 'Old Testament Trinity' (estimate: £30,000-40,000) is one of the star lots of the sale and it also marks the first time since 1995 that a Byzantine, more importantly a Constantinopolitan, icon is offered at auction. After Constantinople was liberated from Latin rule in 1261 artists started producing Orthodox art again. By the early 14th century they had created some of the masterpieces of Byzantine art admired the world over. It is from this milieu that this icon originated. Featuring one of the most popular subjects, the 'Old Testament Trinity', the icon bears all the main

features of the 13th century: soft modelling of the flesh, deep and sombre colours of the garments, ample use of gold, classic proportions of the bodies, noble gestures and timeless stances.

A further highlight of the sale is a Russian icon of St. Nicholas dated 1894 and signed by the artist Mikhail Dikarev, with an opulent gilt and enamel oklad crafted in Moscow by the famous enameller Jakov Fedorovitch Mischukov (estimate: £15,000-20,000). This lot is significant because it was the property of the last Russian Tsar, Nicholas II, commissioned by the Old



Believers Community and given to the Tsar on the occasion of them attaining priesthood. A dedication on the reverse of the panel testifies to the circumstances of the presentation. The exquisitely refined painting matched with the high mastery in crafting the cloisonné enamel oklad makes this one of the most desirable lots of the sale.



Further Russian examples include a monumental and highly significant icon of the 'Exaltation of the True Cross', 16th century (estimate: £100,000-120,000), in excellent condition. Classically painted, this icon narrates the theme of the raising of the True Cross by the Bishop Makarios of Jerusalem following the relic's discovery in the 4th century. The composition includes a portrait of the first Christian emperor St. Constantine the Great and his Mother St. Helena in opulent royal garments. Considered one of the best representations of the subject, this icon has been exhibited in numerous exhibitions around the world and included in many publications.

Signed icons are extremely rare as only the master iconographers signed their panels. The 19th century Russian icon of St Sebastian Sokhotsky (estimate: £8,000-12,000), with its dedication explaining that it was the commission of a merchant and dedicated to the monastic saint portrayed. The central image is flanked by family patrons and above there is a splendid representation of the Old Testament Trinity against a wonderful starry sky.

In the 16th century Crete was a Venetian outpost, and the blending of cultures at the time was profusely manifest in the arts, including the painting of icons. This outstanding 16th century Cretan icon of the Mother of God of Tenderness (estimate: £45,000-65,000) presents the Mother of God holding Christ in the usual pose of the 'Eleousa'. The skilfully executed work, demonstrates all the features of the Cretan technique: the delicate modelling of the faces, highlighted with fine white brushstrokes, the careful shaping of the angular folds of the garments and the intense gold background. In addition, an unusual iconographic feature makes this icon unique: Christ's left shoulder is naked, a characteristic that is not encountered on any other known Byzantine or Cretan icons. This might have been the result of Cistercian influence whose community had a prayer devoted to the shoulder of Christ that bore the Cross.



The Christie's sale will also offer a selection of personal artefacts, used by believers either in their home or while travelling. Highlights include an important late 17th century gold and painted enamel reliquary cross (estimate: £10,000-12,000), still containing the original relics, whose exquisite quality suggests that it was produced in a top Muscovite atelier. A comparable example exists in the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. Also, a late 19th century opulent enamelled

Easter Egg (estimate: £10,000-12,000), inscribed on the outside with the Easter salutation 'Christ is Risen' containing an image of the Kazanskaya Mother of God inside, is expected to attract fierce bidding as enamelled artefacts are highly desirable by collectors.

Finally, the sale will feature a section devoted to ecclesiastical objects including Gospel books, both in Greek and Old Slavonic, chalices, embroidery, benediction crosses, ciboria, collection boxes and *lypera* (the mourning figures of the Mother of God and John the Evangelist that flank the Crucifix on the top of the Iconostasis). Highlights include a Russian Bible, commissioned in the 18th century by the Russian Empress Anna Ioannovna (estimate: £15,000-20,000) and a Greek double-sided processional icon, with the Christ's Descent into Hell on one side and his Resurrection from the Tomb on the reverse, with a dedication, also dating to the 18th century (estimate: £20,000-30,000).

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Images available on request

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Notes to Editors

Russian Sales at Christie's this June

11 June - Icons and Artefacts from the Orthodox World	King Street
13 June - Russian Art	King Street

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2006 that totaled £2.51 billion / \$4.67 billion. This 36% increase over 2005 marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service, and international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewelry, photographs, collectibles, wine, cars and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging markets such as China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Dubai, Mumbai and Russia. Christie's also offers its clients worldwide access to its sales through Christie's LIVE, its unique, real-time online bidding service.